

Voting Information News

September 2004 of Vol. 14, No. 9

A roundup of voting news from the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) for voters, potential voters and those who assist voters.

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"To Do" This Month:

- ✓ Plan your Armed Forces Voters Week (AFVW) activities. Get the entire community involved and aim for 100% contact. Download AFVW poster from FVAP website at: http://www.fvap.gov/serv ices/afvw.html
- ✓ Encourage participation in the remaining 16 primary elections and the upcoming November 2 elections. In many cases, requests for registration must be received at least 30 days prior to the election. Consult the Voting Assistance Guide at www.fvap.gov for state-by-state details.
- ✓ Stateside VAOs, ensure you have adequate supplies of the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) for deploying troops.
- ✓ Overseas VAOs, ensure you have adequate supplies of FWABs for voters you assist.

If your regular state absentee ballot does not arrive in time, use the **The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot**

What exactly is the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB)? What purpose does it serve and where is it available? When can it be used and who can use it? Read on for these answers and more...

The most common barrier that citizens covered under the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* encounter when voting absentee is insufficient ballot transit time. Many citizens are located in remote areas around the world where mail is not delivered or picked up on a regular basis (such as sailors and marines aboard ship, and Peace Corps workers, missionaries, airmen, sailors and soldiers at remote sites).

The FWAB is pre-positioned overseas as a "back-up" ballot should a citizen not receive his or her regular ballot from the state or territory in enough time to meet state deadlines for counting (see Suggestions article on next page).

Under Federal provisions, a U.S. citizen may use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot to vote for Federal offices in the

General Election if that citizen meets all three of the following conditions:

- 1. The citizen must be located outside the United States including APO and FPO addresses, and:
- 2. The citizen must make a timely ballot request, and submit the FPCA or other state accepted form to their state of legal voting residence requesting a state absentee ballot so that the appropriate Local Election Official receives their request at least 30 days before the election. (This year the FPCA must be received on or before October 4th for the 2004 General Election), and
- 3. The citizen has not received the regular state absentee ballot.

In summary, the FWAB is an emergency ballot, only valid when a U.S. citizen makes a timely ballot request for the General Election, is located outside the United States (including APO and FPO addresses) and the requested absentee ballot has not been received (see "How To Use The FWAB" on next page).

Absentee Voting Week - October 11 to 15, 2004

FVAP has designated October 11 to October 15, 2004 as Absentee Voting Week. During this time, VAOs are asked to announce, through various media, that voters should return their voted ballot immediately upon receiving it.

Help dispel the myth that overseas absentee votes do not count! All properly executed ballots are counted.

If overseas voters have not received their regular state ballot by Absentee Voting Week, then they should use the Federal Write–In Absentee Ballot (FWAB). For guidance on completing the FWAB and requirements for using the FWAB, read the articles in this issue. Page 12 of the 2004-05 Voting Assistance Guide contains additional information (available at www.fvap.gov).

Voting Assistance Officers

"To Do" This Month:

- ✓ Be prepared and equipped to give assistance to voters. Remind them of the Voting Information Center where they can call in to hear messages from their elected officials and candidates for Federal offices.
- ✓ Promote the use of the electronic transmission service for those states that accept faxing/emailing. Be familiar with the procedures in Chapter 2, page 12 and Appendix C, and follow the state procedures in Chapter 3 of the *Guide*.
- ✓ Post notices on bulletin boards and in high-traffic areas motivating people to register and vote. Include a point of contact name and telephone number on the notice so interested citizens will know how to obtain additional materials or information.
- ✓ Make sure that the installation or embassy/ consulate operator knows where to refer callers who require voting assistance.
- ✓ Visit the FVAP's website frequently for up-to-date, on-line information and resources from the Program as well as links to other sites of interest in carrying out your duties as a VAO. The FVAP is continually updating the website: www.fvap.gov
- Advise citizens to include a phone number, e-mail address and a fax number (if available) on the FPCA as an alternative means for the Local Election Official to reach the applicant if needed.

How To Use The FWAB

If eligible to use this ballot, the citizen may indicate their election choices for Federal offices in the General Election. To vote this blank write-in ballot, citizens may vote for a candidate by writing in the candidate's name or writing in the name of a party affiliation (if the intention of a voter can be ascertained then, the candidate/party choices will be accepted). The FWAB is similar to the regular state absentee ballot as it includes a security envelope and a mailing envelope.

NOTE: For personal security, you may choose not to fill-in items 1.c, 1.d, and 1.e on the back of the FWAB transmittal envelope (image on page 4). However, if the state requires these items, you may write this information on a separate sheet of paper and place it inside the transmittal envelope (not the security envelope).

Place <u>only</u> the ballot inside the security envelope and do not write on it (image on page 3)!

FWABs are available worldwide at U.S. embassies and consulates, military

installations and overseas organizations and corporations with U.S. citizens.

Currently, the FWAB is prescribed by Federal law for use in general elections for Federal offices only. During the 2004 primaries, on an ad hoc basis, some states and jurisdictions expanded its use for Primary Elections. Eleven states have legislatively expanded its use beyond the Federal law to include use in elections other than General Elections and/or voting for offices other than Federal offices - Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Maryland, Montana, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. Virginia allows the FWAB to be used from within the U.S.

Use the FWAB from overseas when the election is rapidly approaching and insufficient time exists for you to receive, vote and timely return your requested state ballot.

A sample FWAB with instructions can be found in Chapter 2 of the *Guide*. Chapter 3 provides state-specific instructions regarding proper use of the FWAB. ☑

SUGGESTIONS For Submitting The FWAB

We recommend that overseas citizens who have not received their regular state absentee ballot by the 25th day before the election (October 8, 2004), complete and submit the FWAB to their state local election official if they have met each of the requirements (see above). This will help to ensure timely receipt of their absentee ballot for Federal offices. The FWAB must be received by the local election official not later than the deadline for receipt of regular state absentee ballots for that election under state or territory law.

Citizens who receive their regular state absentee ballot after submitting the FWAB should vote and return the ballot immediately. Reason: If a citizen's regular state absentee ballot also arrives by the deadline for receipt of absentee ballots, generally, the state will count the regular state absentee ballot instead of the FWAB, as it will include non-Federal offices.

Citizens should carefully review the FWAB before submission to ensure that the absentee ballot complies with state's guidelines, instructions and requirements. Citizens should make sure that they are submitting the FWAB to the correct jurisdiction. Refer to Chapter 3, Section III (Where to Send It) of the 2004-05 Voting Assistance Guide. Sign and date the ballot return envelope and obtain a notary/witness signature if the state requires it.

Make sure that you are subscribed to the *Voting Information News (VIN)* via e-mail. Why? The FVAP may enter into an ad hoc agreement with the state, or take legal action to allow expanded use of the FWAB. The FVAP will then notify citizens regarding the use of the FWAB through the *VIN*, Voting News Releases and the FVAP website. We encourage you to always vote the regular ballot regardless of its receipt date because a state may allow late counting of these ballots from overseas citizens. ✓

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!

The Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot and The State Special Write-In Absentee Ballot

Several states provide a State Special Write-In Absentee Ballot for citizens who are unable to use regular state absentee voting procedures (submariners, citizens in isolated areas). This **State Special** Write-In Absentee Ballot should not be confused with the **Federal** Write-In Absentee Ballot. Federal law prescribes eligibility requirements for FWAB use. State laws prescribe requirements for State Special ballot use.

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As of the date of this publication, the following states provide a special write-in ballot: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut*, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

State-specific instructions regarding proper use of State Special ballots are provided in Chapter 3 of the 2004-05 Voting Assistance Guide.

*Note: The State of Connecticut is not required by Federal law to accept the FWAB, though in 1996 it began accepting it in regular elections for Federal offices. In addition, a Special State Write-In Ballot is available 90 days before an election to members of the Armed Forces and dependents accompanying them, who, due to military contingencies, are unable to use regular absentee voting procedures.

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

NASS, States Engage Military and Overseas Voters

The National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) has added a military and overseas voters' page to its website as part of its continued efforts to engage the more than one million U.S. troops on active duty and other U.S. civilians overseas. NASS member states and territories will include similar information on their websites.

NASS is also working with the Defense Department and U.S. Postal Service to implement a plan, which the association helped develop, for expedited ballot transport.



Go to <u>www.nass.org</u>. Select Military and Overseas Voters

Voting Action Officers

Department of State: Office of Overseas Citizens Services

Chief VAO: Mr. Jack Markey, **tel:** (202) 736-4937, **fax:** (202) 647-6201, **E-mail:** markeyjd@state.gov Deputy VAO: Ms. Bonita Harris, **tel:** (202) 647-5435, **fax:** (202) 647-6201, **E-mail:** harrisbg@state.gov

Service Voting Action Officers

U.S. Dept. of the Army: Mr. James Davis tel: (703) 325-4530 DSN: 221-4530; fax: (703) 325-4532

DSN fax: 221-4532; E-mail: davisj@hoffman.army.mil,

https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/tagd/pssd/psb/voting/votingindex.htm

U.S. Dept. of the Navy: LCDR Mark Lofton tel: 1-866-U-ASK-NPC (827-5672); DSN: 882-4606, fax: (901) 874-2054,

DSN fax: 882-2054; E-mail: MILL_navyvote@navy.mil, http://www.persnet.navy.mil/nvap

U.S. Dept. of the Air Force: Lt. Col. Lee Shick tel: (210) 565-2338 (Mr. John Lowrance), toll free: 1-866-229-7074 (select option 4,

then 6 from menu), **DSN**: 665-4369; **fax**: (210) 565-2543, **DSN fax**: 665-2543;

E-mail: afpc/dpsfvotingpgmdlist@randolph.af.mil; http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/votefund/

U.S. Marine Corps: GySgt Kenneth B. Warford **tel:** (703) 784-9511, **DSN:** 278-9511;

fax: (703) 784-9827, **DSN fax:** 278-9827; **E-mail:** warfordkb@manpower.usmc.mil https://lnweb1.manpower.usmc.mil/manpower/mi/mra_ofct.nsf/mrp/Voting+Home

U.S. Coast Guard: YNCS Lori McNaught **tel:** (202)-267-1636, **fax:** (202) 267-4823;

E-mail: LMcNaught@comdt.uscg.mil, http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wp/g-wpm/g-wpm-

1/VotingAssistance/Voting Assistance.htm

All of the above can also be reached through the DoD Voting Information Center and the FVAP Website.

Federal Voting Assistance Program

Department of Defense 1155 Defense Pentagon Washington, DC 20301-1155

> PHONE: (703) 588-1584 DSN 425-1584

> FAX: (703) 588-0108 DSN 425-0108

VOTING INFORMATION CENTER: (703) 588 1343

(703) 588-1343 DSN 425-1343

TOLL FREE: 1-800-438-VOTE (8683)

Visit our website for international toll-free phone and fax numbers.

E-MAIL: vote@fvap.ncr.gov

Website: www.fvap.gov

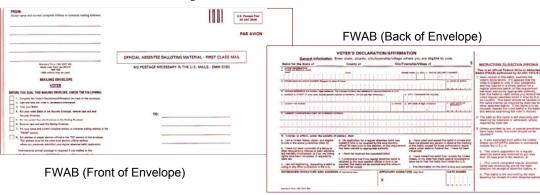
Vote!

VIN -- September 2004

Reasons Why the FWAB May Not Be Counted

- The FWAB may not be counted if it is submitted from any location within the United States (except Virginia voters).
- The FWAB may not be counted if the citizen did not make a timely request for a state absentee ballot (request must be received by your local election office on or before October 4, 2004 for the General Election).
- The FWAB may not be counted if it is not received by the local election official by the state deadline for counting.
- The FWAB will not be counted if the transmittal envelope is not signed and dated, and the required witness or notary signatures are not included (see state instructions of the *Guide*).
- The FWAB will not be counted if the state also receives a properly cast regular state absentee ballot from the voter by the state deadline for counting. ☑

FWAB Transmittal Envelope



NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT TO SUBMIT YOUR FEDERAL POST CARD APPLICATION (FPCA) Standard Form 76 SO THE LOCAL ELECTIONS OFFICE

RECEIVES IT by October 4, 2004!

Why? In many states the deadline for receipt of registration and/or absentee ballot requests is 30 days before the November 2, 2004 General Election. There are no states with earlier

deadlines. Check the *Voting* Assistance Guide for specific state deadlines. Don't miss your state's registration deadline. ✓

Federal Voting Assistance Program

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